~~TOP SECRET~~

31 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT   : OXCART Operations on 27, 28, 29
                  October (local time)

1.   This memorandum is for your information.

2.   Since deployment of the OXCART aircraft
to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, we have flown 18
photographic missions over North Viet Nam. Of
these, 7 were flown during the month of October,
3 of which were on successive days over last week-
end.

3.   [   ] North Vietnamese Air Defense Radar
networks have tracked the aircraft and have steadily
improved their tracking capability. In the past
several attempts to launch a SA-2 missile at the
aircraft have been made but the first actual
launches occurred over last weekend. One such
attempt occurred on Friday night (local time) and
there were probably at least 5 missiles launched
against Sunday night's mission. One from the Kep
Air Field area and 4 from the Hanoi. It will be
several days before we complete our detailed analysis
of this activity but the following preliminary
facts have been established:

     a.   During the period when SA-2
missiles were being launched the aircraft

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was flying in excess of mock 3.1 and at altitudes varying from about 83,000 to 85,000 feet.

b. Our jammer systems aboard the aircraft appeared to function normally and may have played a key role in preventing a shoot down.

c. The pilot actually observed 4 missiles of which 3 appeared to burst behind but fairly close to the aircraft.

d. After landing an inspection revealed a small hole in the bottom of the aircraft which penetrated three layers of titanium metal and the metal object was actually found inside one of the fuel tanks. The fragment is being returned to the US for analysis but we would presume at this point it is in fact a fragment of a SA-2 warhead.

e. COMINT confirms the launches as observed by the pilot and indicates that the launch crews thought that 3 of the missiles performed properly.

4. We are obviously concerned about the safety of the aircraft and will thoroughly review all the information before making final recommendations. For the moment, however, we do not believe that there is sufficient concern to warrant a stand-down and would propose that if the weather clears that we should continue to operate with a number of precautions such as maintaining very high altitude and some adjustment of our flight routes. We will make further recommendations concerning any other adjustments in the program that may be required when our analysis is complete.

CARL E. DUCKETT
Deputy Director
for
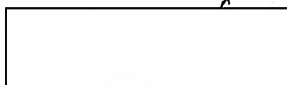Science and Technology

OXCART

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NOTE FOR: The Director

1.   I just got a look at some of the COMINT traffic relating to Friday night's mission and thought a few quotes might be used if a light conversation on this subject develops.

2.   Apparently most of the communications between the Regimental Controller at Phuc Yen airfield and the Battalion Commander of one of the SA-2 sites was intercepted. The Battalion Commander had been ordered to fire when the aircraft was at 32.5 n.m. from the site. The two argued about whether that was beyond the capability of the SA-2 system. He did actually fire when the aircraft was 25.2 miles away. The Battalion Commander said that firing at a distance of 32.5 miles and at an altitude of 78,744 feet was "unrealistic and too far and high for a successful launch." The Controller complained that "One missile was not enough." The conversation then turned to a more congenial mood, and the Controller congratulated the Battalion on their being the "first unit to be able to pick it up and launch." The Battalion Commander replied, "There is the matter of my having experience already. If it continues and comes in again, I'll intercept it." The Regimental Controller then left. The Battalion Commander continued, "Perhaps if we launch at it it will leave, but our missiles are too slow."

Carl E. Duckett